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A DEVOUT WAY

OF

ASCENDING

THE SCALA SANTA

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NOTICE TO THE FAITHFUL

WHO ASCEND

THE HOLY STEPS

As the gaining of the Indulgences depends in great measure on our inward dispositions, we must in the first place remember that the Son of God in working out our redemption again and again ascended and descended these same Steps bound with cords, derided, spat upon, cruelly torn with stripes and bleeding at every pore. Let every one then who is about to ascend these holy Steps imagine that he hears Jesus Christ inviting him to follow Him with the words — “ If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me ” and let him promptly answer “ O Lord I am ready

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to go with Thee even unto death, but since I know my own weakness, I pray thee to stretch forth the hand of Thy grace without which I can do nothing. And then before ascending we may excite ourselves to sorrow for past sins and devoutly say the following—

PRAYER.

O most merciful Jesus! who for the Salvation of the world, of Thine own Will wast cruelly scourged, and crowned with thorns, and then ignominiously dragged by wicked men up and down these steps before Pilate, we humbly beseech Thee, that whilst we devoutly worship the blood stains of Thy sacred Feet, we through the merits of Thy passion may ascend by the steps of Thy grace, and happily reach the throne of Thy infinite glory, where with the Father and the Holy Ghost Thou livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

In going up the Holy Steps it is not necessary to stay long, or to recite long prayers at each Step. It is sufficient to ascend devoutly from one to the other, thinking meanwhile on the passion of our Lord, or reciting the Our Father or Hail Mary, so as not to hinder or disturb those who follow. To such however as may wish to meditate with fruit, and in order, on the Passion of our Redeemer the following pious considerations and prayers taken from the Gospel history are proposed.

MEDITATION

FOR THE FIRST STEP. “He went according to custom to the mount of Olives and kneeling down He prayed.” (*St. Luke 22. 39. and 41.*)

My dearest Jesus! I contemplate Thee when after the last Supper thou didst bid farewell to Thy disciples and begin thy most bitter passion by going to The mount of Olives to pray to Thy Eternal Father;—give me grace always to begin my actions by seeking Thy divine assistance in prayer.

MEDITATION

FOR THE SECOND STEP. "And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." (*St. Luke 22. 44.*)

My most compassionate Jesus ! who thro' the intimate knowledge of all Thy own pains , and of my sins , didst suffer so intense an agony , that a bloody sweat flowed from all Thy sacred Body , and ran down upon the ground : give me grace always to remember that I by my sins have been the guilty cause of this Thy abundant sweat of blood.

MEDITATION

FOR THE THIRD STEP. "Judas drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. And Jesus said to him ; Judas ! dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss ?" (*St. Luke 22. 47. and 48.*)

My Sweetest Jesus ! who didst treat the traitor Judas after his treacherous kiss not only with meekness , but didst even reprove him with love , to shew

him that his betrayal was known to Thee under that sign of friendship — give me grace in all I do to act with simplicity that I may never injure my neighbour by any kind of deceit.

MEDITATION

FOR THE FOURTH STEP. “ The servants of the Jews took Jesus and bound Him.” (*St. John.* 18. 12.)

My beloved Jesus ! who wast seized by the soldiers , bound with cords , dragged from the garden to Jerusalem and treated with every kind of cruelty like the most infamous of men — give me grace to conceive a true and sincere sorrow for my sins , that being freed from all attachment to them I may remain faithful to Thee unto death.

MEDITATION

FOR THE FIFTH STEP. “ And they led Him away to Annas first.” (*St. John.* 18. 13.)

My most lowly Jesus ! who didst willingly submit Thyself to Annas, Cai-

phas , Herod and Pilate — most wicked judges — and to be led backwards and forwards to their tribunals in such great ignominy — give me grace readily to submit myself for Thy love's sake to the judgment of my superiors and to bear in peace the reproofs and rebukes which they from time to time may give me for my correction.

MEDITATION

FOR THE SIXTH STEP. "Then they spat in His face and buffeted Him and others struck His face with the palms of their hands."
(*St. John. 26. 67.*)

My most patient Jesus! who didst bear from the sacrilegious soldiers filthy spittle, upon Thy divine face, on which Angels desire to look, and didst endure the shame of being blindfolded and buffeted with blows — give me grace to enter seriously into the thought of my sins that full of humble confusion , and holy shame I may ex-

cite my hard heart to a true sorrow
for having offended Thee.

MEDITATION

FOR THE SEVENTH STEP. "And they brought
Him bound and delivered Him to Pontius
Pilate the governor." (*St. Matthew 27. 2.*)

My most meek Jesus ! who as a malefactor bound with cords wast led up and down these Steps , which I unworthy am ascending and which Thou didst in many places stain with Thy most precious Blood — give me grace to ascend by the steps of true repentance to the eternal glory in heaven , which Thou hast purchased for me by shedding of this very Blood.

MEDITATION

FOR THE EIGHTH STEP. "Pilate saith to them ;
I find no cause in Him." (*St. John. 18. 38.*)

My most holy Jesus ! who being maliciously accused by false witnesses wast nevertheless declared innocent by Pilate — give me grace to free myself

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from the persecution of my enemies and from false witnesses that I may thus be always bound to render thee unceasing thanks and praises for Thy innumerable benefits.

MEDITATION

FOR THE NINTH STEP. "And Herod with his army set Him at nought, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment."
(*St. Luke 23. 11.*)

My most loving Jesus ! who didst allow thyself for love of me to be mocked and derided by the wicked Herod and wast clothed in scorn with a white garment — give me grace ever to preserve the white robe of purity, until I shall be presented before Thy divine tribunal.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TENTH STEP. "And he sent Him back to Pilate." (*St. Luke 23. 11.*)

My most innocent Jesus ! who as a meek lamb didst allow Thyself to be

led into the court yard of Pilate's palace where thou wast stripped, and left naked in the presence of a great multitude and then wast fast bound to a pillar — give me grace to strip my soul of all affection for the false pleasures of this world and to clothe it with holy virtues by weeping bitterly for my sins that thus I may not appear before Thee in death without the nuptial robe of Thy divine grace.

MEDITATION

FOR THE ELEVENTH STEP. "Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him." (*St. John. 19. 1.*)

My Jesus grievously tormented ! who wast scourged so sorely and in so many ways, until Thy most pure flesh was wounded and torn and Thou couldst say with the Prophet — "they have numbered all my bones" — give me grace to suffer patiently all the afflictions and pains both spiritual and temporal which Thou mayst send me

that I may be able with the Prophet to say unto Thee— “I am ready for stripes” Ps. 37.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWELFTH STEP. “And the soldiers plattig a crown of thorns put it upon His head; and they put on Him a purple garment. (*St. John. 19. 2.*)

My most sorrowful Jesus! whose most sacred Head was with extreme and unheard of barbarity crowned and pierced by the wicked Jews with sharpest thorns and who wast then in derision clothed in a ragged purple garment — give me grace to expel my sinful thoughts by the thought of Thy most piercing wounds, and to clothe my wretched soul with the robe of an ardent love to Thee, and to my neighbour, that I may deserve to be eternally loved by Thee in heaven.

MEDITATION

FOR THE THIRTEENTH STEP. " They put a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him they mocked Him saying ' Hail ! king of the Jews. And spitting upon Him they took the reed and struck Him. " (*St. Matthew 27. 29. 30.*)

My most benign Jesus ! who didst allow these executioners to place a reed in thy hand for a sceptre : to mock thee saluting thee as king of the Jews : to befoul thee with spittle : to buffet thee with blows , and to strike Thy head with the reed — give me grace to bear for Thy love the injuries and insults which I may at any time endure from my neighbour , in the thought that I may thus in some measure become like to Thee.

MEDITATION

FOR THE FOURTEENTH STEP. " Pilate therefore went forth again.... and saith to them : behold the man. " (*St. John. 19. 4. et 5.*)

My most afflicted Jesus ! who being covered with so many wounds and so

"many sorrows wast brought forth by Pilate to the people to move them to compassion — give me grace to contemplate Thee continually thus wounded and bruised by my sins that bitterly bewailing them, I may share Thy sufferings and not offend Thee more.

MEDITATION

FOR THE FIFTEENTH STEP. "He saith to them— which will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said Barabbas. Pilate saith to them — what shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They say all: let Him be crucified." (*St. Matthew 27: 21. 22.*)

My most loving Jesus! I contemplate Thee put on a level with Barabbas, a robber and murderer, in the sight of all that multitude, who cried out that he should be set free and Thou crucified— give me grace always to prefer to the dictates of a foolish world those of Thy divine law, that despising the wicked maxims of the world I may persevere

in the fulfilment of Thy divine commandments.

MEDITATION

FOR THE SIXTEENTH STEP. " And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." *(St. Luke 23. 24.)*

My much slighted Jesus ! who wast given over by the unjust Pilate to the hands of the Jews that they might do to Thee whatever their diabolical fury might devise — give me grace that aided by Thy divine help, I may always resist my evil inclinations and conform myself to Thy most holy will.

MEDITATION

FOR THE SEVENTEENTH STEP. " And Jesus bearing His own cross went forth to that place which is called Calvary. " *(St. John. 19. 17.)*

My wearied Jesus ! who burning with infinite love for the salvation of mankind didst embrace the cross so much longed for by Thee and with the same love didst carry it to mount Calvary —

give me grace to bear with patience, and resignation the cross of tribulations which Thou dost lay on me: yea even to rejoice in following Thee, that I may come one day to reign with Thee.

MEDITATION

FOR THE EIGHTEENTH STEP. "And there followed Him a great multitude of people and of women who bewailed and lamented Him."
(*St. Luke 23. 27.*)

My sorrowing Jesus! who when pitied by those women that beheld Thee thus cruelly treated on Thy way to death, exhorted them to weep rather over themselves — give me grace that in contemplating Thy sorrowful journey to Calvary to be crucified, I may weep over my own grievous sins which were the cause of Thy manifold and most bitter sufferings.

MEDITATION

FOR THE NINETEENTH STEP. “ And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh.”
(*St. Mark 16. 23.*)

My suffering Jesus ! who for support in Thy excessive faintness didst receive into Thy parched mouth from the perfidious Jews the bitter drink of wine mingled with myrrh — give me grace in my trials and sorrows not to seek the vain consolations of the world but only the never ending joys of Paradise.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTIETH STEP. “ But they dividing His garments cast lots.” (*St. Luke 23. 34.*)

My meek Jesus ! who didst allow Thyself to be stripped with such fury by the cruel executioners who then divided Thy garments by lot — give me grace that divested of all affection for the fleeting joys of this world , I may desire and love only the everlasting joys of heaven.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY FIRST STEP. "They crucified Him and with Him two others one on each side and Jesus in the midst." (*St. John. 19. 18.*)

My suffering Jesus! who wast fastened to the cross with hard nails by Thy hands and feet, and then raised up on it between two thieves — give me grace to remain crucified to my passions by a true spirit of penance, that united with Thee on the cross here on earth, I may remain united with Thee likewise in the glory of heaven.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY SECOND STEP. "And Jesus said. Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (*St. Luke 23, 34.*)

My dying Jesus! who full of infinite charity didst pray the Eternal Father to forgive Thy crucifiers and didst lovingly excuse their most frightful sin — give me grace after Thy example and for Thy love's sake alone

to pardon also the offences received from my neighbour and so far from seeking satisfaction, like Thee, to return good for evil.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY THIRD STEP. "Jesus said to him, Amen I say to Thee, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. (*St. Luke 23. 43.*)

Most merciful Jesus! who at the approach of death didst bestow on the penitent thief an eternal Kingdom — give me grace to be sincerely sorry for my sins at the last moment of my life, that I may hear from Thy sweet lips the invitation to the glory of Paradise.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY FOURTH STEP. "And immediately one of them running, took a sponge and filled it with vinegar and put it on a reed and gave Him to drink." (*St. Matthew 27. 48.*)

My abandoned Jesus! who languish
ing on the cross with a burning thirst

by the shedding of all Thy innocent Blood but still more with the desire of suffering new torments for the salvation of sinners, didst see presented to Thy parched lips a sponge filled with vinegar which when tasted did but add to Thy bitter suffering — give me grace to mortify my taste for Thy love by the thought of this loathsome drink and still more by a truly Christian life to correspond with the ardent desire Thou hast shewn for my salvation.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY FIFTH STEP. “And crying with a loud voice Jesus said : Father ! into Thy hands I commend my spirit.” (*St. Luke 23. 46.*)

My agonising Jesus ! who when expiring on the cross didst commend Thy most holy Soul into the hands of Thy heavenly Father — give me grace to understand well the great truth that it will avail me nothing to gain the whole world if I lose my soul, that so giving

it over wholly to Thee as I do from this day forth by an irrevocable gift, I may place it for ever in security from, its enemies.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY SIXTH STEP. "One of the soldiers with a spear opened His side and immediately there came out blood and water." (*St. John. 19. 34.*)

My crucified Jesus! who having yielded up Thy blessed soul, wast to the unspeakable grief of thy Virgin Mother wounded with a lance in the side, whence issued blood and water—give me grace to choose that sacred opening as an abiding resting place that so my unclean soul cleansed by that water and that precious blood may find in itself the power and efficacy of the most holy Sacrament.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY SEVENTH STEP. "Joseph of Arimathea besought Pilate.... that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore and took away the body of Jesus." (*St. John. 19. 38.*)

My loving Jesus! who when taken down from The cross wast placed in the arms of thy most afflicted Mother — give me grace to cast myself into the arms of Thy infinite mercy, that grieving from my heart for having kept Thee so long on the cross by my sins, I may have time solely to weep over and detest them.

MEDITATION

FOR THE TWENTY EIGHTH STEP. "And Joseph taking the Body wrapt it up in a clean linen cloth." (*St. Matthew 27. 59.*)

My adorable Jesus! who didst wish that Thy sacred Body should be wrapt by Joseph of Arimathea in a clean white cloth and placed in a new sepulchre —

give me grace to cleanse my soul from all foulness of sin and to preserve it white and unspotted unto death. Amen.

“ Having thus reached the sacred Chapel of the *Sancta Sanctorum* we may excite ourselves to more devotion, and say the following ”

PRAYER.

O dearest Lord ! stir up we beseech Thee our hearts and raise them up to Thy holy love and to the fervour of Thy faith, that by means of the sacred image of the Saviour of the world which we devoutly venerate here on earth and thro' the merits of the saints whose Bodies and relics lie in this holy Chapel we may become worthy to serve Thee with minds cleansed from all stain of sin and this we beg thro' the merits of the same Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord who with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

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